



# GSL ONLINE

Montana's premiere student loan publication

[www.mgslp.state.mt.us](http://www.mgslp.state.mt.us) (800) 537-7508

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- *College Goal Sunday*  
Feb. 13, throughout MT
- *Presidents Day:*  
Feb. 21 (Office Closed)

## New Feature

MGSLP is keeping an eye on legislature that might affect our financial aid community. Visit [www.mgslp.state.mt.us](http://www.mgslp.state.mt.us) and click on *Legislature 2005* for information on current bill action.

## THE DIRECTOR'S DEN - REAUTHORIZATION

The New Year has arrived with a flurry of activity – especially here at MGSLP and down the road at the Capitol. At GSL, numerous exciting changes have taken place. Karen Wing has been promoted to Deputy Director and Chief Financial Officer. Ron Muffick is our new Director of Business Relations. These two new positions are designed to ensure the best possible service is available to our schools and other business partners. Corena Benjamin is our new Default Prevention Manager and Sandy Bauman is now responsible for Client Services. Again, these promotions should only enhance our customer service. GSL also welcomes Char Song and Staci Peterson to our Business Relations team.

In Legislative Session news, we've been spending lots of time working on the Governor's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program. As of this writing, we are hashing out details for both funding and administration of the program. With luck, Montana might have additional need and merit aid (once fully implemented) that will benefit almost 2,500 Montana students each year!

*Bruce Marks, Director*

## ENHANCEMENTS TO FASTAWARDS™

We have several schools in Montana using FASTAwards, our on-line award letter. As with all our products, we are committed to applying your suggestions and requests in an effort to make this the most user-friendly product available. Consequently, several enhancements will be implemented to FASTAwards early this year.

- FASTAwards will be able to display awards for multiple award years. This means the Financial Aid Office will not have to worry about overwriting an existing award that a student has not yet submitted.
- An automated process will expire awards that are not submitted by the end of the loan period. This allows the students to see those awards, but not to make changes or submit them.
- Access to FASTAwards from the administrative perspective will allow the FAO to see what your students see when they use FASTAwards.
- Schools will now be able to choose whether or not they want to send email notifications to students when award files are uploaded.

In addition to the enhancements for school users, students will have a more streamlined workflow when they log onto the product. Students will see any applicable missing-document messages, student specific messages, or notices regarding missing email addresses on a single, main page. Updated text and help content will make it easier for students to understand the process.

We hope these changes are beneficial to both schools and students and would like to encourage any feedback or additional enhancement requests.

If you are a school that does not currently use FASTAwards and would like to see the product, please notify Carie Kelly at 1-800-537-7508 to schedule a demonstration.

## FOCUS ON FINANCIAL AID FOLKS



Meet Janet Riis, the financial aid director at Carroll College. Janet found her joy in working with students in the financial aid office at Carroll almost 10 years ago. Before moving over to Carroll, Janet worked in customer service

at the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program. When asked why financial aid, Janet replied "It's ever-changing...I love the challenge of keeping up with all the latest processing technology."

When she is not at the office, Janet enjoys a very active lifestyle. "Anything outdoors," she said. In the summer, you can find her with her mom and sister down at the lake. Janet is also a member of a group from Carroll that trains for and participates in the Montana Marathon in Billings. "I like to run, well...I hate to run, but I enjoy the challenge," Janet explained with a smile. If you have trouble finding her at the lake or jogging around town, check the golf course—rumor has it that Janet is also a pretty competitive golfer.